

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Claim 1 (Previously Presented): An image information processing apparatus adapted to receive image information having image data and attribute information pertaining to the image data in a image file format, wherein the image file format enables storage of the image data and the attribute information at arbitrary positions in the image file, comprising:

a communication unit that receives the image information; and

a controller that determines whether a plurality of image data and a plurality of attribute information included in the image information are arranged in a predetermined sequence based on whether an offset value of an image file directory included in a header information of the image information is a predetermined value and whether a character sequence specified by a software tag filed included in the image file directory matches a predetermined character sequence, and decompresses the image data when the image data and the attribute information are determined to be arranged in the predetermined sequence.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): An image information processing apparatus adapted to generate image information having image data and attribute information pertaining to the image data in a image file format, wherein the image file format enables storage of the image data and the attribute information at arbitrary positions in the image file, comprising:

a controller that generates the image information, wherein a plurality of image data and a plurality of attribute information are arranged in a predetermined sequence in the image file and further includes, a first information in a header information and a second information in a first image file directory of the image information, ~~wherein~~ the first and second information identifies the image file format of the image information as being in the predetermined sequence, wherein the first information being an offset value of the image file directory and the second information being a character sequence specified by a software tag filed; and

an output unit that outputs the generated image information.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): The image information processing apparatus according to claim 2, wherein

said output unit exchanges negotiation information in connection with a layout sequence of the attribute information and the image data with a receiver device which receives the image information, and

said controller generates a information specifying the image file format of the image information on the basis of a result of the exchanged negotiation information.

Claims 4-5 (Cancelled).

Claim 6 (Previously Presented): A computer-readable storage medium that stores a program for causing a computer to perform processes for entering and decompressing image information, the processes comprising:

receiving the image information having image data and attribute information pertaining to the image data in an image file format, wherein the image file enables storage of the image data and the attribute information at arbitrary positions in the image file;

identifying, whether a plurality of image data and a plurality of attribute information included in the image information are arranged in a predetermined sequence based on whether an offset value of an image file directory included in a header information of the image information is a predetermined value and whether a character sequence specified by a software tag filed included in the image file directory matches a predetermined character sequence; and

decompressing the image data when the image data and the attribute information are determined to be arranged in the predetermined sequence.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): A computer-readable storage medium that stores a program for causing a computer to perform processes for producing image information, the processes comprising:

generating the image information having image data and attribute information pertaining to the image data in an image file format, wherein the image file enables storage of the image data and the attribute information at arbitrary positions in the image file;

storing a first information in a header information and a second information in a first image file directory of the image information, ~~wherein~~ the first and second information indicates that a plurality of attribute information and a plurality of image data included in the image information are arranged in a predetermined sequence, wherein the first information being an offset value of the image file directory and the second information being a character sequence specified by a software tag filed; and

outputting the produced image information.

Claims 8-9 (Cancelled).